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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [BU](#) [IZ](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: BULGARIANS FOCUSING ON IRAQI FOLLOW-ON MISSION

REF: STATE 164149

Classified By: Ambassador John Beyrle for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: In their Sept. 7 introductory meeting, new Bulgarian FM Kalfin told Ambassador Beyrle that Bulgaria considers it very important to be "loyal, predictable and remain involved in Iraq," and hopes to have its position regarding follow-on Iraqi military participation ready for discussion sometime next week. The Bulgarians would like to have questions regarding Iraq participation and establishment of U.S. "bases" here resolved before President Purvanov's Oct. 17 White House meeting. Kalfin also thanked Amb. Beyrle for our continuing efforts to free the Bulgarian medics held in Libya. Bulgaria, he noted, will request another Tripartite demarche before the Nov. 15 Libyan court decision on the imposed death penalty. Kalfin asked for Embassy support of his requested meeting with Secretary Rice in New York, and said he would like to work closely with us on economic issues, intellectual property rights and arms control. End Summary.

Iraq

2. (C) Ambassador Beyrle used the opportunity of his Sept. 7 informal credential presentation to raise Iraqi points per reftel instructions. He thanked FM Kalfin for Bulgaria's contributions in Iraq, and highlighted U.S. understanding of the political and human costs it has incurred. The Ambassador briefly explained the proposed MEK mission as well as the NATO Training Mission's (NTM-I) need for force protection. Kalfin responded that Bulgaria hoped to respond very quickly and has begun an interagency process to determine what is both politically and militarily possible. They hope to have an initial "framework" position ready by next week that will then require political concurrence within the governing coalition and, very likely, the Parliament. Kalfin appeared optimistic and said they were considering some "good options."

3. (C) Per reftel, the Ambassador also asked that Bulgaria delay the start of its withdrawal until the political process in Iraq has been completed as defined by the UN resolution. Kalfin responded that the follow-on activities would likely affect plans for withdrawal or redeployment. He did, however, raise the logistical requirement to withdraw the current soldiers based on their six-month commitment by mid-December, and the political difficulty of sending another contingent for this Mission.

Bases

4. (C) Kalfin predicted a successful conclusion to the "basing" negotiations and said there is "clear political will" to move forward. Although some questions remain, Kalfin implied they could be easily overcome. Amb. Beyrle noted that the U.S. negotiating team is ready to return, and suggested an Embassy-Ministry meeting to identify outstanding issues and prepare for the team's arrival. Kalfin agreed and said the Bulgarians would like to have the basing issues as well as the Iraqi question resolved prior to President Purvanov's meeting with President Bush.

Libya

5. (C) Kalfin thanked the Ambassador for our continuing support and said Bulgaria will request another meeting in October to produce a Tripartite demarche prior to the Nov. 15 Libyan court decision. He also thought a parallel U.S. demarche would be useful. In the meantime, he added, Bulgaria was working on humanitarian aid for the Libyan children affected with HIV/AIDS through a new NGO and supporting the EU's Action Plan. While Bulgaria will provide "considerable resources," it will not negotiate with the families on payment of "blood money," Kalfin said.

6. (C) Amb. Beyrle assured Kalfin of our support, and encouraged the Bulgarians to engage in some form of bilateral communication with the Libyans to determine their true bottom line. Kalfin said they plan to maintain contact with the Libyans on many different levels.

Full Agenda

17. (U) The Ambassador and Kalfin agreed they would both like to build on the excellent bilateral relations now being

enjoyed. Kalfin said a strong relationship with the U.S. was one of Bulgaria,s highest priorities, later adding that economic issues and arms control are important areas for continued cooperation. Kalfin also raised Bulgaria,s challenge in meeting the requirements that will allow it to enter the European Union on January 1, 2007. Highest among them, according to Kalfin, is judicial reform. The Ambassador promised Kalfin full U.S. support for its on-time EU entry, calling it a goal for the U.S. as well as Bulgaria.

Comment

18. (C) Bulgaria,s strong desire for a successful Purvanov-Bush meeting will be a positive influence on their Iraqi deliberations. We will ensure that the Bulgarian military also receives etails of the follow-on options in reftel to tryto leverage their strong desire to remain in Iaq to our advantage. In his first meeting with th Ambassador, Kalfin expressed a strong commitmen to maintaining close relations with the U.S. andclearly understood the importance we place on te Iraqi follow-on mission. We recommend reinforing the message by arranging at least a brief pul-aside for Kalfin with the Secretary in New York. End Comment
BEYRLE